

These things, among innumerable other ones, a certain Nicholas realized from Metsovo, who out of cowardliness for his life had become a Turk. And his torch was relit from the Light of the Resurrection, he confessed his faith and became a martyr, melting himself like a torch, in the fire where he accepted for them to burn him. A Christian bought his holy skull and hid it, building it in the wall of his house. When however, the house changed owners, the new renter discovered the sacred relic, observing a light, one day, at that spot of the wall. It was the day of the memory of the Saint, whose “earthen vessel” shone even from within the wall, “the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God”.

With his intercessions, let us also make our own “earthen vessels” receptive of the divine light, so that the grace abounding through the many, may abound unto the glory of God”.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2019 2ND SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Cyriacus the Hermit of Palestine, Martyr Petronius, Theophanes the Merciful of Gaza, Dionysios I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Malachi the New Righteous Martyr of Lindos.*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal of the Second Tone*

EOETHINON : *Fourth Orthros Gospel*

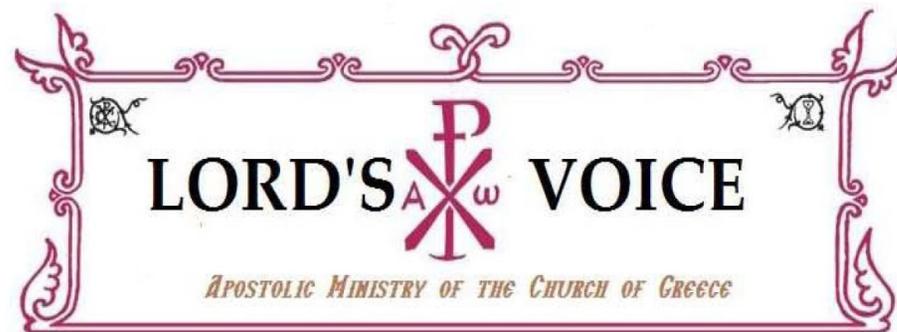
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 6:11-36*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 06, 2019 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE, *The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas, Eroteis the Martyr of Cappadocia, Makarios the Righteous of Chios*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 7:11-16*



67TH YEAR SEPTEMBER 29 2019 PAMPHLET #39 (3461)

APOSTOLIC TORCH RELAY RACES

The preeminent «torchbearer» of the Church, the Apostle Paul lit his torch from the uncreated light of Christ losing his physical light. “The one who will enlighten the universe is darkened”, says a troparion of his feast. The light-giving God “in the person of Jesus Christ” “captured” him outside of Damascus and “shone in his heart for the enlightenment of the knowledge of His glory”. The newly illumined Paul also lost the Pharisaical self sufficiency, that he is able with his own “virtues” to keep unquenched the torch that he lit from Christ. He realized henceforth, that he is nothing more than an “earthen vessel”, who holds, on the one hand, inside him, the most invaluable treasure, but he does not cease being fragile. And only “the excess of the power of God” is able, to protect him, but also to make him radiate the true light, especially furthermore, in the dark storms of the persecutions and of the afflictions.

Naturally this “excess” of grace which made Paul not despair and not lose his courage, was not a permanent comforting “armchair”. The Apostle – being in danger of being accused of haughtiness – had written to the Corinthians in his First Epistle that, yes, on the one hand, whatever I am, I am from the grace of God, but I also more than everyone, toiled” (15:10).

EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S 2^D LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 1:4-6:15

Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Without patience, toil, pain and sacrifice, which are offered with one's whole soul and freely, one is not able to reach to the "life giving deadening" of himself. This refers to a deadening that concerns first, the works of sin and the passions. Often, however, it also contains in it, the danger of physical death. It becomes a constant "hide and seek" with death, where "the life of Jesus" is very triumphantly revealed and glorified "in our mortal flesh".

The revelation of the resurrectional life

To many imitators of the Apostle, Saint Avramios also belongs, who was sent to illumine an idol worshipping city of

Mesopotamia at the end of the third century. Whoever had tried to work there as missionaries, had returned having done nothing and wounded. Avramios first built a beautiful church and began liturgizing in it. The idol worshipping inhabitants were impressed by the church, but almost daily were beating up the Saint. and sometimes they would leave him half dead. The saint had to forbear this martyrdom for three entire years, in order for the inhabitants who were sitting "in the darkness and the shadow of death" to be convinced that "the excess of power" and of patience that they saw in the Saint, is of the one and only true God. For three years the Saint "carried about the deadening of the Lord Jesus in his body" and thus very triumphantly "the life of Jesus was revealed in his mortal flesh".

The brightest revelation of the life of Christ occurred with his Resurrection and his victory against death, with which he granted us the capability of incorruption of our mortal flesh. It is an event that comprises the foundation of the faith of all the "torchbearers" of the Church. From this resurrectional Light they lit their torch and this Light was their preaching and their witness.

Keep the torch lit

For someone however, to light his own lantern also from the Light of Christ of the Resurrection of Christ, he must lose his trust in the created lights "of the wisdom of this age" and accept "the foolishness" of the apostolic preaching. A "foolishness" nevertheless, that was sealed with rivers of the blood of the apostles, the martyrs and the confessors. And for one to understand that this light – as the Apostle said – comprises the greatest treasure of his life, he must consider "ashes and dust", according to Saint Kosmas the Aitolian, all the treasures of the world, which "the moth and the rust wipes out and the thieves steal them".